



THE BEVIN BOYS ASSOCIATION

FOUNDED 1989

CHAIRMAN Anne.E.Lane. Tel: 01275 463703.

SECRETARY

D. Elizabeth Todd,
"The Chalet",
24 Oldfield Way,
Heswall, Wirral,
Merseyside.
CH60 6RG
Tel. 0151 342 3703

Website: www.bevinboysassociation.co.uk

TREASURER & ARCHIVIST

Barbara McElroy,
37.Danforth Drive,
Framlingham,
Suffolk.

IP13 9HH
Tel. 01728 724533

MEMBERSHIP, SALES, & NEWSLETTER

Anne E. Lane,
Snipelands,
Bourton Combe,
Flax Bourton,
Bristol.
BS48 3QL
Tel. 01275 463703.

email: bevinboys1943@gmail.com

COMMITTEE

Margaret Rose,
57 Smiths Lane,
Fakenham,
Norfolk.
NR21 8LQ

Tel. 01328 856745

NEWSLETTER FOR AUTUMN 2023.

Chairman's Message.

Welcome to your Autumn Newsletter.

Well we have done our 2023 AGM on Zoom. Six of us including one Bevin Boy attended the AGM. It was lovely to see old friends again.

The good news is that we intend to keep the newsletters, website and Remembrance books going whilst we can. We still have a full management committee and next year plan a virtual AGM on Zoom again. There will also be a Social meeting before Christmas – again via Zoom. Date to be confirmed. All welcome! Please ask friends and family if you are unsure, so hopefully lots of you will be able to join us and see everyone, even if just on a computer screen! **Contact me for the contact details and passcode for Zoom meetings**, which will then be sent two days prior to the meeting.

I wish you all a Happy, Prosperous and Healthy 2024,

Anne. (Lane)

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY.

I hope the 'Season of Mists and Mellow Fruitfulness' weather has been kind to you in your area. Next the month of November brings commemorative occasions for two world wars.

Gary Bridson-Daley has had his book published 'The Last Stand ' Memories of War', printed by Amazon Paperback from £20 58p. Gary interviewed Harry Parkes B.E M. past Association Treasurer, which can be found on page 265. It makes very interesting reading. He actually interviewed each of the veterans in the book.

Locally our u3a are holding a Remembrance exhibition of memorabilia in the Village Hall. I shall be showing books about the Bevin Boys, also Gordon's actual lamp from his time in the mines. He was allowed to keep it. On handing it in on his last day he was told it would be scrapped it as it was no longer fit for purpose. When he asked if he could keep it the miner said he wasn't allowed to let him do that, then said 'Oh keep it lad' and he did. I still have it, in pride of place on the mantelpiece. I am sure it will provoke comment. Enjoy whatever activities you will be involved in, if any.

Best wishes,
Liz Todd.

Treasurer's Report.

I am pleased to report that our accounts have been audited and that we are in a healthy financial position. Owing to a generous donation from a Bevin Boy's family we actually have a larger balance than last year although we had been working on a planned deficit since I took over as Treasurer. We continue to support Area Reunions and this is now our largest item of expenditure. The Annual Reunions were always expensive but the last one was in 2021. We did purchase a Zoom licence so that we could continue to fulfil our obligations of reporting our financial position and any future plans. At present we aim to continue to run as an Association and our funds will allow us to carry on for the foreseeable future.

Thank you to all who continue to donate.

Barbara McElroy.

Archivist's Report.

I have been in touch with the Imperial War Museum as I have a few original documents and have arranged to send these shortly. As you know they hold the bulk of our archives. The museum are no longer accepting newspaper cuttings or non -paper based articles as they do not have the capacity to look after them, however I am in contact with the curator at Caphouse English Mining Museum and it looks likely that they will be able to take items that have been entrusted to me. Some of you will be aware that they have a permanent Bevin Boys exhibition and they now also have our banner so I feel confident that they will seek to keep the Bevin Boy story alive.

We do still have occasional enquiries from relatives, probably fewer this year as life picks up after Covid. We did have an enquiry from Wales regarding flying our banner in remembrance of Bevin Boys. Whilst a nice thought, you may recall that we donated our Banner to Caphouse Mining Museum as they are able to both display it and keep it in a climate controlled environment

Barbara McElroy.

Sales.

For all Sales, please apply to Mrs A. Lane, Snipelands, Bourton Combe, Flax Bourton, Bristol. BS48 3QL. Tel: 01275 463703. All cheques to be made payable to **THE BEVIN BOYS ASSOCIATION**. Please add **£1 for the lighter items & £2 for the books, as they are expensive to post.**

Blazer Badge	@ £10.00	Digging Up the Past	@ £10.00
Miners Lamp Keyring	@ £6.00	Bevin Boy Lapel Badge	@ £5.00p

Bevin Boy Banner Postcard, 2 Black & White postcards, 2 colour & 2 black & white prints of A4 size from A Bevin Boy Remembers **ALL POSTCARDS & A4 PRINTS @ £0.20 each.**

Bevin Boys Association Website.

Just to remind you all that we have an **Official** Bevin Boys Association website. This contains information about the Association, pictures of the Bevin Boy's plot at

Alrewas, the contact details for all the Committee, and also the Newsletters, Please go to:- <http://www.bevinboysassociation.co.uk> or to email the committee bevinboys1943@gmail.com

Thank you to everyone who has submitted items for the Newsletter.

If you prefer to have access to the Newsletter online or email or have any input or news items for publication please contact me on Tel: 01275 463703 or e-mail: alananne2749@gmail.com

Membership and Newsletters.

We are asking all Bevin Boys to ask their son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter or nearest friend to **contact us** with **their** contact details. We are getting quite a few returned Newsletters with no explanation! If the Bevin Boy has sadly died, we would like to know so that we can add their name to The Book of Remembrance. This eventually will be placed with our memorabilia at the Museum of Coal for England at Caphouse Colliery, Wakefield.

Would you please be sure to advise us of any changes of address or ask wives, partners, sons and daughters to inform us of any changes in circumstances etc.

Snippets.

As you know I have been going around giving talks about the Bevin Boys for some time now. I have been privileged to talk to quite a few Bevin Boys over the years when I have gone to annual and regional reunions, and it is good to use some of their anecdotes which make the subject come alive for the audience.

I always talk about the accommodation as it varied so much. I remember Charlie telling me that he was called up in December 1943 so was one of the first Bevin Boy conscripts. He had come from Kent and was up north somewhere, so knew nobody, and had to go round knocking on doors trying to find somewhere to live. I recall Peter French telling me that in 1944 he was given a list of doors to knock on, where he might find accommodation. Some improvement by then! He ended up in a miner's home with the miner, his wife, another Bevin Boy and two small children. There were no pithead baths, so it was home to a tin bath. The Bevin Boys were on different shifts so as one got up, the other crawled into bed. I do wonder about the state of both the bath water and the sheets! My father was luckier, as by the time he was called up in November 1944, he was in a mining hostel where rations were extra and passed on, he said the food was good and they were well looked after. Those in lodgings like Peter and Charlie had to hand over their ration books with extra ration coupons and some fared better than others. In one case I was phoned by a Bevin Boy's daughter who told me of her father being sent down with 'Snap' of condensed milk sandwiches. Not much sign of the extra protein in that meal. What were your experiences I wonder? It seems they were generally very varied, and I know some landladies were very good and became lifelong friends.

I also talk about attitudes towards Bevin Boys. I know young men were conscripts and of course being out of uniform they were often subjected to verbal attacks and abuse, and some were given white feathers. All this meant that many Bevin Boys did not talk about their experiences. We still have folk ringing up when a Bevin Boy has passed away, saying that they never realized that their relative was a Bevin Boy as they never talked of it. The saddest story I have heard was as a response to a talk I gave in a nearby village. At the end a gentleman came up to tell me about his older cousin who was one of three brothers. His two older brothers were called up to the armed forces, but when his turn came he was conscripted down the mines. He was so bitter and angry about this, that he fell out with all his family and it tainted their relationships for the rest of their lives.

I have of course heard many funny stories too. Peter French said that in training, the miner teaching him told him to tuck his arms and hands in when on the Paddy Train like he was in a pram, and then went on to give further advice about his hands - which was to keep them off the local young ladies! I'm sure you have funny tales to tell also. Talking of Peter French you may recall that he was our official photographer for many years, as he was a professional photographer by trade. Phil Yates recalled that Peter went to great lengths to take some of the photos, for instance climbing high ladders to take aerial views of groups of Bevin Boys. No doubt many of you still have some of his photos. Phil kindly handed all his photos over to the Imperial War Museum some time back.

I hope you have enjoyed a few of my memories.

Barbara.

EDITORS PLEA!

I always welcome any contributions for the Newsletter. Please send to Anne Lane at the address at the top of this Newsletter. Many thanks!

PLEASE NOTE!!

Please don't forget to send your £5 subscription to continue receiving your twice yearly Newsletter in 2024 to Anne Lane. We ask you to pay by BACS please, details from Anne.